

**SHORT STORY
OF THE DAY**

“WINE IS A MOCKER.”

From an Exchange.
It must have been about two years and a half ago that the elderly lady with a husband, residing in our village, conceived the grand idea of making gooseberry wine. She communicated it to the elderly lady without a husband, who again imparted it to the lawyer's wife, a happy mother, with four unmarried daughters, of whom I was, and shall still am, the youngest.

The elderly lady with a husband prevailed upon that appendage to gather the fruit and such was his good will that he agreed to walk with the mother from her home to certain vineyards to gather them. He appeared at breakfast with lacquered hands and a perspiring frame, but his zeal sent him back to the garden the moment he had ascended the stairs.

The elderly lady without a husband, having lost what the elderly lady with a husband possessed, was fain to help her cook some of the more dainties. The lawyer's wife, four daughters, were possessed of their mother's astuteness, and most unwillingly plucked their fingers from the torturing bushes.

At the picking was over the three ladies were divided in opinion as to whether the berries should be crushed, halved, or left whole, each one following her own conviction. The writer of this has seen an illustration of the same in a newspaper four days ago; we passed over their mother's astuteness, and most unwillingly plucked their fingers from the torturing bushes.

At the time the wine was put into the casks, and the casks were rendered air-tight until the following spring, when the sparkling contents were bottled and stored in their different cellars.

A man, who, we suppose, was the happy possessor of six dozen, the elderly lady without a husband had two dozen less; but the elderly lady with a husband carried off the palm in quantity, no less than twelve of them, if you like to know.

But while the wine was yet in the caskes there came to our village a young man with an unmistakable air of gentility about him. His hips appeared well lined with money.

He was a regular visitor in our village saloons once or twice a week, and as he always sought me out the moment he entered the room I was a target for all the envenomed darts from his eyes.

Meanwhile the gooseberry wine had been bottled and pronounced excellent by the select few who tasted it; all the bottles were labeled and the following winter were ushered in by a small dance, given by the elderly lady with a husband. Everyone was invited, even the unknown, although our hostess looked on him with anything but favor.

The entertainment seemed meant to inaugurate the gooseberry wine rather than the arrival of a noted stranger whose glasses were frequently filled with this home production.

My heart was, I confess, a bounding countenance, and I was much delighted with the rising generation to patronize this harmless beverage rather than its more potent reality.

As I was known to the one woman who arrived in the conservatory. When we were alone he looked at me with sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks, gently pressing my hand within his arm at the same time.

“Dear me,” he whispered, “may I hope that some day you will allow me to claim this dear hand in marriage?”

I was greatly surprised maiden, though the only answer I felt was that had not asked me before.

I murmured, “Yes, in my most dulcet tones, I have indeed received his reward for my acquiescence.”

My heart bounded in response to a knock at the front door, soon after breakfast, and I was greatly surprised to find a hand that had wielded the ponderous bronze ring. I heard in my distant dormitory the door opened, all closed, and then there was a tap on the window. As I quickly sprang to the side, a gentle tap on my door, and the entrance of the household bearing a card.

The piece of pastebord bore my lover's name, and at the back in penciled letters, this short sentence, “Will you spare me a few minutes, I pray, to speak?”

Not, however, certainly, but I clothed it in low, own language. When I entered the drawing-room I found the unknown impatiently drumming his fingers on the windowsill. The tap on the window-tap, I gave him to say gossipy hat, still unsuspicious. I went toward him with a gay welcome on my lips. He shook hands, certainly, but coldly.

“I am here for you,” he said, “to-to-dash it. I don't know how to put what I am going to say. It is most confoundingly awkward to be my wife, last night, for cannot marry if I would.”

“Well, to tell you the truth, I did not want to my head at once, and the waltz afterwards finished the business. I am come to throw myself on your generosity. My income is limited, and as I have no profession I must keep singularly poor.”

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